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For Environmental Justice

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Media Statement

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ENHANCE PREVENTIVE MEASURES TO HANDLE DENGUE CASES

We must collectively ensure cleanliness of housing areas, commercial premises, parks, etc. to ensure the surroundings are free of Aedes mosquitoes breeding grounds to curb the dengue menace. The dengue problem can be prevented and controlled if everyone kept their surroundings clean and are always cautious. These measures are necessary, taking into consideration the many cases of outbreaks that have been reported so far.

Sahabat Alam Malaysia (SAM) takes seriously the issue of dengue which is still prevalent in several states including Penang. Bulletin Mutiara reports that there has been an increase of dengue fever cases in Penang, rising from 2,558 in 2014 to 5,430 in 2015.

Statistics in the iDengue website shows that there were 32 dengue-related deaths from 3rd January 2016 till 2nd February 2016. The number of accumulated cases in Malaysia from 3rd January 2016 till 7th February 2016 is 17,493 (Source: Bilik Gerakan Denggi Kebangsaan CPRC, Ministry of Health Malaysia). The number of dengue cases in Penang was 911 and eight deaths were reported.

The drastic increase of dengue cases is worrying as worldwide we are astounded by the Zika virus infection that is spread through the Aedes mosquito. It is estimated that as many as 23 countries reported spreading of this virus and Brazil is the country hardest hit with more than 1.5 million cases since April last year.

SAM is very concerned because according to the Ministry of Health (MOH) the Zika virus infection has spread so fast in the Americas and the Ministry of Health believes the risk of transmission of these infections to Malaysia is high due to several factors. Among them the carrier is the Aedes mosquito.

The survey conducted by SAM in several areas such as in housing estates, villages, playgrounds, recreational areas, shop lots, construction sites found one of the reasons of the widespread of dengue disease is the abundance of Aedes mosquito breeding ground due to stagnant water because of poor drainage and litter.

MoH has advised that all containers that can collect rain water or surplus water are destroyed. This includes buckets, basins, old tyres, plastic containers, cans and so on which allows the mosquitoes to breed.

People should play their role and jointly clean their premises and neighbourhoods to eliminate Aedes breeding grounds. SAM believes that the majority of people are aware of the dangers of dengue but the level of awareness about the causes is still unsatisfactory.

Therefore SAM calls on the public and the authorities to give serious attention to this matter and collaboratively eliminate mosquito breeding sites regularly and periodically. Every effort to prevent dengue should be enhanced as it will also reduce the risk of Zika virus infection.

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